

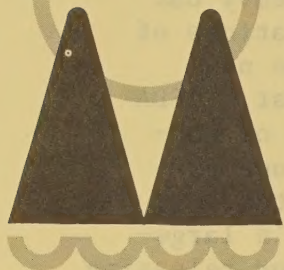
## **Historic, Archive Document**

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.





2HC79  
.E5R4



U.S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE  
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LIBRARY  
RECEIVED  
NOV 16 1972  
PROCUREMENT SECTION  
CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

# RESPONSE

## A Report on Actions for A Better Environment

NO. 9

OCTOBER 1971

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE • OFFICE OF INFORMATION • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

*RESPONSE is a periodic report from the United States Department of Agriculture on USDA's many areas of action to remedy environmental problems. Department programs protect and improve the environment through research, forestry, conservation and a wide range of rural and community services.*

### NEW WATER BANK PROGRAM

USDA will operate a Water Bank Program in 1972 to help farmers preserve, restore, and improve the migratory waterfowl producing wetlands of the nation. Congress has authorized \$10 million for the program. Funds will be available until committed and expended under 10-year agreements with owners and operators of eligible wetlands in important migratory waterfowl nesting and breeding areas. Participants (in return for payments) will agree not to drain, burn, fill, or otherwise destroy the wetland character of such areas, or use them for agricultural purposes. The program is expected to be ready for field operation by early 1972. ASCS

### LURE OF THE WILD

Gypsy moth caterpillars currently are defoliating 400,000 acres of trees annually in the Northeast and are spreading to other areas. As one approach to control USDA scientists discovered the chemical identity of the gypsy moth's sex lure last November and then synthesized the natural attractant. This attractant, disparlure, is now to be tested for its potential in controlling the pest under a \$392,000 cooperative agreement between USDA and the Pennsylvania Agricultural Experiment Station, State College. The two major approaches will be: (1) To see if trapping the male can be accomplished in sufficient numbers for control, and (2) to see if broadcast applications of the sex lure can confuse the male population enough to reduce reproduction to below infestation levels. ARS-FS

### FOOD SUSCEPTIBILITY TO PESTICIDE CONTAMINATION

The first attempt to classify all commercial food and feed crops as to degree of susceptibility to possible contamination by pesticides is now off the press. Titled "Food and Feed Crops of the United States--A Descriptive List Classified According to Potentials for Pesticide Residues" may be ordered from the Director, New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 08903.



#### MORE ON THE GYPSY

Development of a comprehensive 5-year research and development program to control the gypsy moth was announced by USDA this month. The action was recommended by the Secretary's National Gypsy Moth Advisory Council who predicted that the heavy oak tree area of Appalachia may explode with heavy populations of the moth during the next five to 10 years unless some new defense mechanism becomes available to combat the pest. USDA is accelerating research and development on a number of non-polluting controls and expects to register at least one preparation of a microbial insecticide for use against the pest in 1972. Also, in an attempt to counter this summer's large-scale gypsy moth spread, the Department is rearing and releasing tiny wasps that are natural enemies of the tree destroying pest. About 20,000 wasp parasites are being released where gypsy moths were caught for the first time this summer. The wasps inject their eggs inside gypsy moth eggs, destroying them.

#### REAP FUNDS

The Rural Environmental Assistance Program (REAP) helps farmers to carry out conservation and environmental protection measures through cost sharing. Long range preservation of the environment and benefits to the public welfare are primary considerations in approving measures for REAP assistance. This month Secretary Hardin announced the 1972 funding for the program at \$140 million, a figure which subsequent legislation could change. The 1971 REAP program was funded at \$150 million. ASCS

#### ANIMAL WASTE MANAGEMENT

The first National Symposium on Animal Waste Management (meeting at Airlie House, Warrenton, Va.) produced preliminary recommendations on government and private actions to deal with waste problems. Attendees included federal and state legislative, administrative and regulatory officials, Extension leaders researchers and farm leaders. Their major recommendations emphasized approaches to animal waste management that would not disrupt the industry and which would maximize application of wastes on land as fertilizer. Copies of the conference compendium will be available later this year for purchase. Inquiries should be addressed to: The Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

#### CONSERVATION ADVISORY

Among recent recommendations of the Public Advisory Committee on Soil and Water Conservation were: (1) that more be done to inform the public of USDA contributions to solving agriculture-related pollution problems as a result of its research, education, technical assistance, credit and cost sharing efforts; (2) that USDA consider developing methods for assessing annual changes in land use; and (3) that action be taken to insure that agricultural land is included in any legislation on national land-use policy. The committee of 20 citizens, appointed by the Secretary, evaluate resource conservation programs and make recommendations periodically. SEC



PROGRESS ON  
PCBs

Last month twelve scientists, involved in the detection and elimination of chlorinated hydrocarbons that occasionally contaminate foods, reported to a subcommittee of the President's Cabinet Committee on the Environment that improved methods of detecting and quantitatively determining traces of polychlorinated biphenyls or PCBs at government and private laboratories are being successfully developed. Although USDA has been testing for chlorinated hydrocarbons in food since 1948, only last March did the Consumer and Marketing Service (along with state scientists) start testing specifically for PCBs. Earlier detection had been inhibited by the close similarity of PCBs to other chlorinated hydrocarbons (including persistent pesticides). This group of chlorinated hydrocarbons in relatively recent times was identified as possessing the potential for dangerously contaminating commercial food supplies, primarily through accidental introduction into the food chain. Now when the monitoring of poultry and other livestock reveals sources of PCB contamination, an intensified coordinated federal, state, and private detection effort is instituted until the danger to the consuming public is eliminated. Maximum acceptable levels set by FDA for PCB in foods range between .5 parts per million for eggs and egg products to 5 ppm in edible tissues. PCBs, once found in many widely used manufactured materials, are now confined to use in closed coolant circulating systems.

PRESCRIBED  
BURNING

The proceedings of a symposium on prescribed burning on forests of the Southeastern Coastal Plain are now available. Included are reports on effects on vegetation, timber species, and wildlife and range habitats; and effects on physical and chemical properties and the microbial and faunal populations of soils. The broad environmental aspects are discussed from the ecologist's view of prescribed burning and its impact on the forest ecosystem. Single copies of the proceedings are available free as long as the supply lasts. Write to: Director, Southeastern Forest Experiment Station, P.O. Box 2570, Asheville, N.C. 28802. FS

EFFECTS OF  
PESTICIDES  
ON NON-TARGET  
SPECIES

"Ecological Effects of Pesticides on Non-Target Species" was recently prepared at Cornell University at the request of the Office of Science and Technology in the Executive Office of the President. It was commissioned to help meet the need for a single source of data on the environmental effects of pesticides. A comprehensive compilation of published data, this report is available for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, at a cost of \$2.

WATERSHED  
SYMPOSIUM  
ANNOUNCED

A symposium on the management of watersheds and their water resources amid changing environments and social priorities is being planned by the American Water Resources Association and Colorado State University. Flagged as "Watersheds in Transition," this national symposium will be held next June 19 to 21 at Fort Collins, Colorado.



PROTECTED  
BY PLUM  
ISLAND

USDA's Plum Island Animal Disease Laboratory (the national center for research on foreign animal diseases) just announced a faster, more sensitive method of detecting foot-and-mouth disease (FMD). This most destructive of livestock diseases is a continuing threat to the livestock industry although the last outbreak here occurred 42 years ago. If reintroduced it could cost an estimated \$3 billion to eradicate. Also, this month a livestock industry-government advisory committee recommended to the Secretary of Agriculture that additional funds for research personnel and facilities be provided and program procedures reinforced to adequately protect United States livestock from foreign animal diseases. Meanwhile, reporters who recently visited the Plum Island facility were assured of the laboratory's security controls for virus research and its considerable current capacity to detect the presence of and direct operations against possible introductions of foreign animal diseases including FMD and African swine fever. Demands on the laboratory, however, continue to grow. A decade ago diagnostic service was required on only 34 specimens involving only 4 diseases in a year. So far this year diagnostic services have been required for over 2,000 specimens involving 12 diseases.

INSECT SCOUTS

"Insect scouts" receive intensive 3 to 4 day short courses by Extension entomologists and county agents. Then cotton growers employ them to make weekly field insect population counts to determine if the loss to insect damage each week is enough to justify starting a control program. This year 628 of these scouts checked 877,225 acres of cotton in 10 states with growers themselves scouting another 3,792,228 acres. Advantages of scouting crop insects, rather than just going into a predetermined control schedule, are: (1) A reduction of the amount of insecticides introduced into the environment, and (2) a savings in cotton production costs.

FILM SERVICE  
ESTABLISHED

The National Association of Conservation Districts recently announced a new environmental film service. It is starting out with nearly 2,000 prints of 154 films. They will be loaned at nominal charge to conservation districts, schools, colleges, universities, TV stations, civic clubs, and other groups concerned about environmental matters. Free catalogs listing the films are available from the NACD Environmental Film Service, P. O. Box 855, League City, Texas 77573.

BOLL WEEVIL  
CAMPAIGN

The most comprehensive boll weevil eradication experiment in history went into its second phase this month with preharvest defoliation completed on 8,000 acres of cotton in Mississippi and Louisiana. The eradication experiment (being conducted on 30,000 acres during this year and next) will provide the first large-scale, coordinated testing of advanced biological and nonpersistent chemical suppression techniques developed over the past decade. The current phase of the project is aimed at depriving the boll weevils of food and stalks required for them to successfully hibernate in large numbers. (The overall experiment includes some land in Alabama.) ARS